

Annual Report



OF THE

HEALTH AND SANITARY CONDITION

OF THE

WALSALL RURAL DISTRICT

FOR THE

Year ending December 31st, 1921,

BY

GEORGE MARTIN FOX,


M.D., D.P.H.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

WALSALL;

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To the Walsall Rural District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour of presenting my Twenty-fifth Annual Report on the Health and Sanitary Condition of the Walsall Rural District for the year ending December 31st, 1921.

In December, 1921, a circular was issued by the Minister of Health revising the particulars to be included in the Annual Reports of Medical Officers of Health. Reports of a full and detailed character will henceforth be required only at intervals of five years. In other years the Reports will be of a more simple character and will not contain details of conditions which do not vary from year to year.

The Population of the District, as ascertained by the census, which was made last June, was 13,220.

Population.

There were 328 Births registered in the district, of which number 184 were males, and 144 females, 6 males and 2 females were illegitimate. The birth rate was 24·81 per thousand. Last year the rate was 29·49. The birth rate for the whole of England and Wales was 22·4.

Births.

Under the Notification of Births' Act I received 303 notifications, which number shows a slight improvement on last year. It still appears, however, that Medical Practitioners are not so punctilious as they should be with respect to the obligation imposed upon them to see that the birth of every child is notified to the Medical Officer of Health.

Deaths.

The number of Deaths occurring in the district this year was 121, of which number 66 were males and 55 females.

The death-rate from all causes and at all ages was 9·15. Last year the rate was 13·12. The death rate for the whole of England and Wales for 1921 was 12·1. The death-rate this year is by far the lowest which has been recorded in the history of the Walsall Rural District, and is a striking proof; not only of the general healthiness of the neighbourhood, but also of the good effect of the various efforts which have been made during recent years to improve its general sanitary condition

Infantile
Death Rate.

There were 24 deaths of children under one year of age, as compared with 36 last year. The infantile mortality, as measured by the proportion of the number of deaths registered at ages under one year to 1,000 births, was 73·1. Last year the number was 96·5.

The infantile death rate is also the lowest that has been recorded in this district.

It is especially remarkable considering the length of the excessive heat experienced last summer, which frequently produces a large amount of severe diarrhoea in young children. I am hopeful that the various agencies which are at work for improving the condition of child life, as well as the better educational status of the young mothers is already beginning to bear fruit. It will be necessary, however, for the rate to continue to remain low for a number of successive years before any positive deductions can be established.

Only 12 deaths were due to Zymotic diseases, exactly half the number for last year, viz.:— 3 from whooping cough, 3 from diphtheria, 2 from influenza and 4 from diarrhoea. The Zymotic death rate was .90. Last year it was 1.89.

Zymotic
Death Rate.

The ordinary routine health visiting throughout the year has been done in a satisfactory manner.

Maternity and
Child Welfare.

There have been several changes in the staff of the health visitors. Last year in my Annual Report I expressed a wish that the health visitors would remain longer in the district, but I suppose this is impossible. I am convinced however that such frequent changes are undesirable and detrimental to the efficiency of the work.

Not a single death was due to Measles during the year and only 3 deaths were due to Whooping Cough.

Measles and
Whooping
Cough.

Diphtheria.

17 cases of Diphtheria were notified during the year, of which number 3 proved fatal. One case was at Rushall, 3 were at Great Barr, 8 were at Pelsall, and 5 at Aldridge. Ten cases were removed to the Walsall and District Hospital, one of which proved fatal.

Three cases occurred at the R.A.O.B. Hospital, Aldridge. All the cases were isolated and treated in the Institution.

Scarlet Fever.

27 cases of Scarlet Fever were notified, but no case proved fatal, 5 cases occurred at Pelsall, 12 at Aldridge, 2 at Rushall, and 5 at Great Barr. Five cases were removed for treatment to the Isolation Hospital, at Cheslyn Hay, in the Cannock Rural District.

It will be seen that the practice of removing cases of Diphtheria and Scarlet Fever to hospital when proper isolation cannot be obtained at home has been continued with very satisfactory results.

Para-Typhoid
Fever.

One case of Para-Typhoid Fever was notified from Aldridge, the diagnosis of which was confirmed by bacteriological examination. It was a mild case, and the young woman made a good recovery.

Puerperal
Fever.

Three cases of Puerperal Fever came to my knowledge, 1 from Great Barr and 2 from Rushall. One of the Rushall cases was removed to the

Walsall General Hospital, where she died and was not notified to me. I traced the woman's death through the transfer slips of people dying in other districts. The other two cases, one of which was removed to the Walsall General Hospital, and the other to the Walsall Workhouse Infirmary, made good recoveries.

Two cases of Ophthalmia Neonatorum were notified, one from Pelsall, and one from Aldridge. The Pelsall case was a very mild one. The Aldridge case was removed to the Walsall Workhouse Infirmary, and afterwards was discharged cured.

Ophthalmia
Neonatorum.

A case of Encephalitis Lethargica was notified in March. On visiting the premises I found the patient was 75 years of age, and was making a good recovery. I sent a special report of the case at the time to both the County Medical Officer and the Ministry of Health.

Encephalitis
Lethargica.

Six cases of Erysipelas were notified, 4 from Aldridge and 2 from Great Barr.

Erysipelas.

One case of primary Pneumonia was notified from Aldridge and proved fatal.

Pneumonia.

Under Form A of the Tuberculosis Order of 1912, 16 cases of this disease were notified

Tuberculosis.

Six cases were notified under Form C, and 7 under Form D.

During the year 6 deaths were due to Pulmonary Tuberculosis and 3 to other Tuberculous diseases.

Bacteriological
Examination.

32 swabbings from throats were sent to the Bacteriological Department of the University of Birmingham for the detection of diphtheria bacilli, 15 of which proved positive and 17 negative. 4 specimens of blood were sent for detection of the typhoid (Widal's) reaction, one of which proved positive and one negative.

Scavenging.

I believe the scavenging is a little better done now than was the case a few years ago, but I consider that it is still far from being efficient. You already know my views on the subject, and I hope now that the Greater Walsall Scheme has been abandoned, and when the times become more normal than they are at present, that the Council will take the matter seriously in hand, and see whether it is not possible for them to be directly responsible for this important work.

Housing and
Town Planning
Act.

More building has taken place during 1921 than at any time since the War, but the houses that have been erected are either small villas or bungalows.

No houses suitable for the accommodation of the working classes have been built by private enterprise, and this is the type of house that is so urgently needed.

The 20 houses erected by the Council at Aldridge and the 25 at Great Barr, have been completed, and are all occupied.

The shortage of houses in the district is as bad as ever, and it follows that it has been impossible to deal with the overcrowding which still exists in all the parishes of the District.

The work of the Housing and Town Planning Act has been continued on the same lines as in previous years, of which the following is a resumé:—

- (1) Houses inspected in the district:—Rushall, 176; Pelsall, 136; Aldridge, 124; Great Barr, 86; Bentley, 28 Total, 550.
- (2) Houses fit for human habitation in present condition:—Rushall, 138; Pelsall, 105; Aldridge, 96; Great Barr, 69; Bentley, 25. Total, 433.
- (3) Houses having defects for which notices were served:—Rushall, 38; Pelsall, 61; Aldridge, 28; Great Barr, 16; Bentley, 3. Total, 116.
- (4) Houses made reasonably fit for human habitation, the repairs including roofs, floors, better ventilation and sanitary conveniences:—Rushall, 25; Pelsall, 23; Aldridge, 24; Great Barr, 10; Bentley, 2. Total, 84.

No action has been taken under Section 17 of the Housing and Town Planning Act during the year.

Under Section 15 five notices were served.

Work-places

The work-places, including the bake-houses and dressmakers' shops, have been regularly visited during the year. Three women are engaged in home-work (brush-filling)—2 at Pelsall and 1 at Rushall.

The Sanitary Inspector, Mr. Jackson, has done his best during the year to fulfil the various duties of his office.

For the twenty-fifth time, allow me to thank you for your continued confidence and support.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant

GEORGE MARTIN FOX.

September 2nd, 1922.

STAFF.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH—

G. M. FOX, M.D., D.P.H., *Part Time Officer.*

INSPECTOR OF NUISANCES, &c.—

GEO. JACKSON, *Whole Time Officer.*

Contributions are made to the Salaries of the above out of Exchequer Grants.

Deaths registered during the Calendar Year 1921.

CAUSES OF DEATH				Males	Females
(Civilians only).					
ALL CAUSES	...	...	...	66	55
Whooping Cough	...	...	...	2	1
Diphtheria	...	...	...	1	2
Influenza	...	...	...	2	—
Tuberculosis of Respiratory System	...	...	...	3	3
Other Tuberculous Diseases	...	...	...	3	—
Cancer, malignant disease	...	...	...	6	8
Diabetes	...	...	...	—	1
Cerebral Hæmorrhage, &c.	...	...	...	4	5
Heart Disease	...	...	...	5	2
Arterio-sclerosis	...	...	...	3	1
Bronchitis	...	...	...	3	4
Pneumonia (all forms)	...	...	...	5	4
Ulcer of Stomach or Duodenum	...	...	...	—	1
Diarrhœa, &c. (under 2 years)	...	...	...	3	1
Appendicitis and Typhlitis	...	...	...	—	1
Acute and Chronic Nephritis	...	...	...	1	—
Pueperal Sepsis	...	...	...	—	1
Congenital Debility and Malformation,					
Premature Birth	...	...	...	7	3
Deaths from Violence	...	...	...	4	1
Other Defined Diseases	...	...	...	14	16
				—	—
Deaths of Infants under 1 year—					
Total	...	...	...	17	6
Illegitimate	...	...	...	1	—
				—	—
TOTAL BIRTHS—					
Legitimate	...	...	...	178	142
Illegitimate	...	...	...	6	2
				—	—
				184	144
				—	—
POPULATION—					
(For Births and Deaths)—13,220.					

TABULAR SUMMARY of the WORK of the SANITARY DEPARTMENT
 during the year and action, taken under the Public Health Acts or Bye-Laws, &c.

	No. of Abatements Notices.				Nuisances abated after Notice by	
	Inspections and observations made	Defects	Informal by Inspector	Formal by Authority.	Inspector	Authority
Dwelling Houses and Schools—						
Foul Conditions	3	5	2	—	5	—
Structural Defects	549	126	54	8	7	23
Overcrowding	28	28	28	4	4	3
Unfit for Habitation	5	5	5	3	2	1
Lodging Houses	—	—	—	—	—	—
Milk Shops and Dairies	23	2	2	—	2	—
Cowsheds	49	11	11	—	11	—
Bakehouses	12	5	5	—	5	—
Slaughter-houses	13	3	3	—	3	—
Canal Boats	15	—	—	—	—	—
Ashpits and Privies	671	219	53	8	168	7
Deposits of Refuse and Manure	7	7	4	—	6	—
Water Closets	105	23	19	2	12	1
House Drainage—						
Defective Traps	10	7	3	—	—	—
No Disconnections	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other faults	17	8	8	2	8	2
Water Supply	8	4	4	—	4	—
Pigsties	6	2	2	—	2	—
Smoke Nuisances	1	1	1	—	—	—
Totals	1,523	456	204	27	239	17

Food and Drugs Acts—

No. of Samples of Water taken for Analysis	...	..	8
No. of Samples of Water condemned	...	...	4

Precautions against Infectious Disease—

No. of Houses Disinfected after Infectious Disease	...	48
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Sanitary Administration—

No. of Privy Closets converted to the Water Carriage System during the year	67
Total No. of W.C's at end of the year	...	...	...	1,135
Total No. of Privy Closets remaining at the end of year	...	...	...	1,366

HOUSING.

Number of new houses erected during the year :—				
(a) Total	...	...	...	39
(b) As part of a Municipal Housing Scheme	...	...	...	None
1. UNFIT DWELLING HOUSES.				
Inspection—(1) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)				
	...	...	...	2,944
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910	...	...	...	549
(3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	...	...	...	None
(4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-heading) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	...	...	...	126
2. REMEDY OF DEFECTS WITHOUT SERVICE OF FORMAL NOTICES.				
Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers				10
				84
3. ACTION UNDER STATUTORY POWERS.				
A.—Proceedings under Section 28 of the Housing, Town Planning, &c., Act, 1919.				
(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs				None

(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit :—			
(a) by owners	...	...	None
(b) by Local Authority in default of owners	...	...	None
(3) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by owners of intention to close			
	...	...	None

B.—Proceedings under Public Health Acts.

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied			
	...	...	116
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied :—			
(a) by owners	...	...	84
(b) by Local Authority in default of owners	...	...	None

C.—Proceedings under sections 17 and 18 of the Housing, Town Planning, &c., Act, 1909.

(1) Number of representations made with a view to the making of Closing Orders			
			None
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made			
			None
(3) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the dwelling-houses having been rendered fit			
	...	..	None
(4) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made...			
			None
(5) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders			
		...	None

FACTORY AND WORKSHOP ACT, 1901.

REPORT of the Medical Officer of Health on the Administration of the Act in the Sanitary District of Walsall (Rural) during the Year 1921.

1.—INSPECTION.—Including Inspections made by Sanitary Inspectors or Inspectors of Nuisances.

Premises.	Number of		
	Inspections.	Written Notices.	Prosecutions.
Workplaces (other than Outworkers' Premises)	33	1	—

2.—DEFECTS FOUND.

Particulars.	Number of Defects.	
	Found.	Remedied.
Want of Cleanliness	5	5
Defective Sanitary Accommodation	2	1

4.—REGISTERED WORKSHOPS.

Total Number of Workshops on Register	20
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11th September, 1922.

GEO. JACKSON, Inspector.